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AUTHOR Austin-Martin, George: Bull, Diana
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ABSTRACT

The results of a survey of cooperating teachers indicate that they favor a certification requirement for supervisors of student teachers. Most believed that a teacher should have at least three years of teaching experience and demonstrated teaching competence before becoming eligible for training as a cooperating teacher. Aspects of certification should be handled by the local school district and the colleges. Many cooperating teachers expressed concern about the usefulness of courses taught by the colleges, feeling that they may be too abstract and theoretical. The cooperating teachers saw certification as a method to standardize much of the student teaching field experience, to eliminate weak cooperating teachers, and generally to improve the quality of the student teaching experience. Tables showing actual percentages are included. (CJ)

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ATTITUDES OF COOPERATING TEACHERS TOWARD CERTIFICATION

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George Austin-Martin
Secondary Education Department
Stephens College

Diana Bull
Secondary Education Department
Stephens College

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INTRODUCTION

Should teacher educators aim for the certification of cooperating teachers to the end that only those so certified could be assigned a student teacher?

A survey of 80 educational institutions in 45 states found that while only 3% required certification for cooperating teachers and only 7% required courses in supervision, 22% of the institutions indicated a trend in the direction of requiring certification of cooperating teachers (Gregory, 1971).

Those in favor of certification cite studies and their own experiences which indicate that the student teaching experience is the single most important aspect of teacher education (Zulauf, 1959; Nagle, 1959; Miller, 1961; Hardingham, 1977). Campbell and Williamson (1976) stated that many well qualified teachers are overlooked in selecting cooperating teachers because of the haphazard criteria used in the selection process. They found the following criteria was used by many school principals and administrators:

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1. "He knows his subject."
2. "He is the chairman of the department."
3. "He is active in professional associations."
4. "He is liked by his students."
5. "It is his turn to have a student teacher."

Bartholomew's research (1976) gave additional support to certify cooperating teachers in that he found that training cooperating teachers in supervision and observation was effective in maintaining the student teacher's level of performance. Perhaps the most compelling argument cited for certifying cooperating teachers is that researchers have found that the cooperating teacher serves as a role model and can "make or break" the student's teaching experience and his/her career (Heitzmann, 1977).

Opponents of certification for cooperating teachers cite the many problems which would confront teacher education under such a plan. For certification to become a requirement for supervising student teachers, it must have the support of those most intimately involved in the field experience, the cooperating teachers. Kachur (1973) found a growing dissatisfaction on the part of cooperating teachers with student teaching programs. He found that many cooperating teachers feel they are a neglected partner in what they consider to be a partnership between the teacher education institutions and the public schools. Some educators state that certification is impractical because the knowledge and skills needed by cooperating teachers are too closely tied to the subject matter to have much generalizability to other disciplines. Thus, a certification program for an English cooperating

teacher would be different from a program for a Physical Education cooperating teacher if it was to be useful (Kirkpatrick, 1975). In a survey of 851 elementary and secondary school teachers, Metzer (1972) found that many teachers were against certification, particularly if colleges were responsible for the training because: (1) college courses tend to be too abstract and theoretical, and (2) much of teacher education is ineffective when teachings are applied to problems in the field, and (3) teacher educators have failed to identify the real, genuine problems encountered in the field.

What are the attitudes of cooperating teachers toward certification? Are there differences between elementary and secondary cooperating teachers? Who should award the certificate? Who will provide the training? Who should be certified? To answer some of these questions, a survey was taken of classroom teachers who have been cooperating teachers and the results of the survey are here within reported.

METHOD

Sample. The population for the study consisted of all teachers from one public school district who had been assigned a student teacher or a pre-student teacher to supervise during the fall semester, 1978. One hundred twenty teachers, 60 elementary and 60 secondary school teachers were randomly selected from the population.

Procedure. The literature was reviewed to identify the issues which had been raised in connection with the question of certification of cooperating teachers.

A 16-item questionnaire was constructed to provide answers to issues raised in the literature. A cover letter was written which explained the

purpose of the study. The cover letter, questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were placed in an envelope and mailed to the cooperating teachers in the study. While responses were anonymous, the teacher's school name was typewritten on the enclosed envelope so that the responses could be separated into elementary and secondary teacher responses.

A follow-up was conducted to increase the number of responses. The researchers visited each teacher at his/her school to request that they send in the questionnaire if they had not yet done so.

RESULTS

A total of 60 cooperating teachers, 23 elementary and 37 secondary, returned the questionnaire.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of cooperating teachers who responded to the following questions:

1. Cooperating teachers should be certified before they are assigned a <u>student teacher</u>.

2. Cooperating teachers should be certified before they are assigned a person in a <u>pre-student teaching</u> field experience.

(Table 1 Here)

The majority of both elementary and secondary cooperating teachers favor certification of those who would supervise student teachers. Only the elementary cooperating teachers agreed that certification should be a requirement for those teachers who supervise pre-student teachers.

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of elementary and secondary teachers responses to the following question:

3. What requirements should exist to become eligible for certification as a cooperating teacher?

(Table 2 Here)

Elementary and secondary cooperating teachers agreed on the requirements for cooperating teachers: three years of teaching experience, specialized training, teaching performance and a B.S. and B.A. degree. There was also agreement on the requirements for cooperating teachers who supervise pre-student teachers: teaching performance and a B.S. or B.A. degree.

Most of the cooperating teachers, elementary and secondary, want either the local school districts or colleges and universities to both award the certificate and provide the training as indicated by their responses, shown in Tables 3 and 4, to the following questions:

4. Which group(s) should be responsible for <u>awarding</u> the certificate?

5. Which group(s) should be involved in the <u>training process</u>?

(Table 3 Here)

(Table 4 Here)

The elementary and secondary cooperating teachers show a preference for a permanent certificate for supervisors of both student teachers and pre-student teachers as indicated by their responses shown in Table 5.

(Table 5 Here)

Table 6 shows the responses to Question 7 below. Most of the elementary and secondary cooperating teachers favor training for cooperating teachers and some experience as a cooperating teacher before a certificate is awarded.

7. What procedure(s) should be established in determining the awarding of a certificate?

(Table 6 Here)

Table 7 shows the responses to Question 8 below concerning initial certification. Elementary and secondary cooperating teachers agreed that cooperating teachers supervising student teachers should have: (1) three years of teaching experience, (2) specialized training, (3) teaching performance, and (3) B.S. or B.A. or M.S. or M.A. degree. Elementary cooperating teachers favored the following qualifications for initial certification for supervisors of pre-student teachers: (1) three years teaching experience, (2) B.S. or B.A. degree. The

responses of the secondary cooperating teachers does not present a clear picture of their preferences.

8. If two levels of certification were established, what requirements should exist to become eligible for initial certification as a cooperating teacher?

(Table 7 Here)

Elementary and secondary cooperating teachers agreed on the requirements for advanced certification for supervising of student teachers (Question 9) as indicated by their responses, shown in Table 8: (1) five years teaching experience, (2) specialized training, and (3) performance as a cooperating teacher. They also agreed on the qualifications for supervising pre-student teachers: (1) specialized training and (2) performance as a cooperating teacher.

9. What requirements should exist to become eligible for advanced certification as a cooperating teacher?

(Table 8 Here)

When asked what incentives should be offered to teachers who participate in training programs for cooperating teacher certification, both elementary and secondary split their responses fairly evenly among the four choices shown in Table 9.

(Table 9 Here)

A plurality of elementary and secondary cooperating teachers indicated by their responses to Question 11 below, that they would be willing to participate in a training program leading to a cooperating teacher certificate. Fourteen elementary cooperating teachers, or 60%, indicated they would participate in a training program while three, or 13%, indicated they would be willing to participate in a training program leading to a certificate, while nine, or 40%, indicated qualified acceptance. Fifteen secondary cooperating teachers, or 40%, indicated they would, and five, or 14%, indicated they would not be willing to participate in a training program. Fifteen, or 40%, indicated qualified acceptance.

11. If certification was a requirement for cooperating teachers, would you be willing to participate in the necessary training?

Table 10 shows the cooperating teachers responses to Question 14 below, concerning the mode of training for cooperating teachers. Secondary cooperating teachers preferred training programs through local school district inservice workshops while elementary cooperating teachers preferred that mode as well as college courses in supervision.

14. What mode of training would you like to see for training cooperating teachers?

(Table 10 Here)

Questions 12 and 13 were concerned with obtaining the cooperating teachers perceptions as to the advantages and disadvantages of certifying cooperating teachers. Listed below are representative responses by the cooperating teachers to each question.

12. In your opinion what are some of the advantages of certifying cooperating teachers?

Elementary:

"Guidelines for supervision of students teachers would be standardized."

"It would weed out bad teachers who shouldn't have student teachers."

"It would attract better qualified teachers who are really interested in student teachers."

"Cooperating teachers would be more knowledgeable and up-to-date."

"Increase the quality of the instruction for the pupils in the classroom."

"Better teachers would be produced."

Secondary

"Provide a standardized professional atmosphere for the student teaching experience."

"Training would help the cooperating teacher with evaluation, writing letters of recommendation and critiquing student teachers."

"Avoid cooperating teachers from signing up for a student teachers to get eight weeks off."

"The cooperating teacher would really care about the quality of future teachers."

"To interest stronger teachers in becoming cooperating teachers."

"Help cooperating teachers improve techniques; place emphasis on good teaching procedures."

13. In your opinion what are some of the <u>disadvantages</u> of certifying cooperating teachers?

<u>Elementary</u>

"Some teachers would not be willing to go through certification."

"Boards and principals will still play favorites."

"Not enough time available to participate in certification."

"Teachers do not have the money or time."

<u>Secondary</u>

"This would just be another meaningless course."

"Teachers would not have the time."

"It would decrease the size of the teacher pool available to accept student teachers."

"Some excellent teachers would not participate in the training."

"Cooperating teachers are already doing a good job."

"Too much red tape."

"Training would destroy innovation and imagination."

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey indicate that both elementary and secondary cooperating teachers favor a certification requirement for supervisors of student teachers. The cooperating teachers were split on the need for certification of those who would supervise pre-student teachers with elementary cooperating teachers in favor of certification and secondary cooperating teachers opposed.

Most of the cooperating teachers wanted a teacher to have at least three years of teaching experience and demonstrated teaching competence before becoming eligible for training as a cooperating teacher. Both elementary and secondary cooperating teachers wanted all aspects of the certification handled by the local school district and the colleges and universities. Many cooperating teachers expressed concern about the usefulness of courses taught by colleges and universities. There is a feeling that the training might be too abstract and theoretical, having little relevance for cooperating teachers and the problems they face in the field.

Secondary cooperating teachers appeared to have more doubts about the colleges and universities providing the training than did the elementary cooperating teachers, and preferred local school district workshops by a two to one margin. Both groups favored a one level, permanent certificate for cooperating teachers.

Many of the cooperating teachers saw the process of certification as a method to standardize much of the student teaching field experience, eliminate weak cooperating teachers, and generally improve the quality of the student teaching experience. However, some saw certification as

possibly discouraging many excellent teachers because of the lack of incentives to obtain the certifcate, destroying the innovation and the imagination of cooperating teachers and creating a shortage of cooperating teachers. Several cooperating teachers doubted whether the competencies necessary for a "good" cooperating teacher could be distilled.

It is clear from the cooperating teacher's responses that any certification requirements must be tied to a set of attractive and meaningful incentives. The cooperating teachers have very strong opinions about how the concept of certification should be applied. Without their inclusion in the decision-making process, it appears from their comments that the idea of certification will receive little support among teachers and perhaps never become a reality.

TABLE 1

Question		Elementary N	Elementary %		Secondary N	Secondary %
1	YES	18	78	YES	24	65
	NO	5	22	NO	12	32
	NO ANSWER	1	4	NO ANSWER	1	3
2	YES	13	57	YES	15	41
	NO	9	39	NO	17	46
	NO ANSWER	1	4	NO ANSWER	-	-

TABLE 2

Requirements	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
State certification only	5	22	9	39	7	19	9	24
One year teaching experience	3	13	6	26	11	30	16	43
Three years teaching experience	13	56.52	8	35	20	54	11	30
Five years teaching experience	6	26	1	4	8	22	4	11
Specialized training for cooperating teachers	12	52	7	30	15	41	9	24
Teaching performance	12	52	10	43	19	51	16	43
B.S. or B.A. degree	16	70	12	52	21	57	19	51
M.S. or M.A. degree	3	13	1	4	6	16	3	8
Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree	0		0		0		0	

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 3

Agency Awarding Certificate	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
State education agency	7	30	4	17	11	30	8	22
Local school district	12	52	9	39	13	35	17	46
Teacher centers	2	9	1	4	10	27	9	24
Professional organizations	1	4	1	4	5	13.51	3	8
College and universities	11	48	8	35	15	40.54	16	43
Other	1	4	1	4				

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 4

Who Will Train?	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
State education agency	7	30	5	22	10	27	8	22
Local school district	16	70	13	56.52	20	54	19	51
Teacher centers	5	22	14	61	11	30	10	27
Professional organizations	2	9	2	9	9	24	8	22
Colleges and universities	15	65	16	70	25	68	29	78
Other	1	4	1	4				

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 5

Plan of Certification	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
One level: temporary certificate, to practice supervision, not renewable	0	-	0	-	2	5	3	8
One level: permanent certificate	12	52	10	43	15	40.54	15	40.54
One level: renewable certificate	5	22	3	13	11	30	10	27
Two levels: first level not renewable, secondary level renewable	1	4	1	4	3	8	2	5
Two levels: first level not renewable, second level permanent	1	4	0	-	2	5	2	5
Two levels: first level renewable, second level renewable	3	13	3	13	3	8	3	8
Other								

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 6

Procedure established in awarding certificate	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Completion of an approved training program for cooperating teachers	19	83	13	57	25	68	19	51
Experience as a cooperating teacher	14	61	10	43	26	70	24	65
Peer approval of actual performance as a cooperating teacher	2	9	1	4	9	24	8	22
Peer approval of simulated performance as a cooperating teacher	1	4	1	4	2	5	2	5
Other	3	13	3	13	2	5	2	5

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 7

Eligible for Initial Certification	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
State teacher certification only	0	-	2	9	8	22	11	30
One year of teaching experience	2	9	4	17	15	40.54	16	43
Three years of teaching experience	13	56.52	9	39	17	46	13	35
Five years of teaching experience	5	22	-	-	4	11	2	5
Specialized training for cooperating teachers	11	48	7	30	13	35	7	19
Teaching performance	9	39	7	30	15	40.54	12	32
B.S. or B.A. degree	12	52	10	43	16	43	13	35
M.S. or M.A. degree	2	9	0	-	4	11	3	8
Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree	0	-	0	-				
Other	2	9	2	9				

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 8

Eligible for Advanced Certificate	Elementary				Secondary			
	ST*		PST**		ST		PST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
State Teacher certification only	0	-	1	4	4	11	6	16
One year of teaching experience	0	-	2	9	1	3	4	11
Three years of teaching experience	7	30	6	26	10	27	13	35
Five years of teaching experience	12	52	8	35	18	49	11	30
Specialized training for cooperating teachers	14	61	9	39	19	51	15	40.54
Performance as a cooperating teacher	13	56.52	8	35	15	40.54	14	38
Teaching performance	8	35	5	22	14	38	13	35
B.S. or B.A. degree	9	39	7	30	12	32	10	27
M.S. or M.A. degree	4	17	1	4	9	24	7	19
Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree	0	-	0	-	-	-	-	-
Other	2	9	2	9	-	-	-	-

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 9

Incentives for Cooperating Teachers	Elementary N	Elementary %	Secondary N	Secondary %
Course work for certificate count toward advancement on teacher certification renewal (if Missouri ceases to have a permanent certificate).	10	43	25	68
Course work for certificate count toward advance on salary scale.	12	52	23	62
Course work for certificate count toward an advanced degree.	13	57	19	51
Teachers with certificate paid more than those without certificate for being a cooperating teacher.	9	39	18	49

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

TABLE 10

Training for Cooperating Teachers	Elementary		Secondary	
	N	%	N	%
College course(s) in supervision	13	57	10	27
College workshop(s)	8	35	14	38
Teacher center workshops	7	30	15	41
Local school district in-service training	15	65	25	68
Other	4	17	4	11

* Student Teacher
** Pre-student Teacher

STEPHENS COLLEGE
Secondary Education

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION: Should the teaching profession aim for certification of cooperating teachers to the end that only those so certified could be assigned a student teacher or pre-student teacher in teacher education?

DIRECTIONS: If you agree, circle YES; otherwise circle NO.

YES NO 1. Cooperating teachers should be certified before they are assigned a student teacher.

YES NO 2. Cooperating teachers should be certified before they are assigned a person in a pre-student teaching field experience.

If you answered YES to 1 or 2, please answer questions 3-14, pp. 1-4.

If you answered NO to 1 and 2, please answer questions 3-15, pp. 1-4, assuming that Certification would be a requirement for Cooperating Teachers.

DIRECTIONS: Please check each item for both Student Teaching (ST) and Pre-student Teaching (PST). You may check more than one answer under each question, if appropriate.

3. What requirements should exist to become eligible for certification as a cooperating teacher?

ST	PST	
___	___	State Teacher Certification only
___	___	One year of teaching experience
___	___	Three years of teaching experience
___	___	Five years of teaching experience
___	___	Specialized training for cooperating teachers
___	___	Teaching performance
___	___	B.S. or B.A. degree
___	___	M.S. or M.A. degree
___	___	Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree
___	___	Other _____

4. Which group(s) should be responsible for awarding the certificate?

ST	PST		ST	PST	
___	___	State education agency	___	___	Professional organizations
___	___	Local school districts	___	___	Colleges and universities
___	___	Teacher centers	___	___	Other _____

5. Which group(s) should be involved in the training process?

ST	PST		ST	PST	
___	___	State education agency	___	___	Professional organizations
___	___	Local school districts	___	___	Colleges and universities
___	___	Teacher centers	___	___	Other _____

6. Some have suggested having two levels of certification; initial and advanced. Which plan would you favor?

ST	PST	
___	___	One level: temporary certificate, to practice supervision, not renewable
___	___	One level: permanent certificate
___	___	One level: renewable certificate
___	___	Two levels: First level not renewable, second level renewable
___	___	Two levels: First level not renewable, second level permanent
___	___	Two levels: First level renewable, second level renewable
___	___	Other _____

7. What procedure(s) should be established in determining the awarding of a certificate?

ST	PST	
___	___	Completion of an approved training program for cooperating teachers
___	___	Experience as a cooperating teacher
___	___	Peer approval of actual performance as a cooperating teacher
___	___	Peer approval of simulated performance as a cooperating teacher
___	___	Other _____

8. If two levels of certification were established, what requirements should exist to become eligible for initial certification as a cooperating teacher?

ST	PST	
___	___	State teacher certification only
___	___	One year of teaching experience
___	___	Three years of teaching experience
___	___	Five years of teaching experience
___	___	Specialized training for cooperating teachers
___	___	Teaching performance
___	___	B.S. or B. A. degree
___	___	M.S. or M.A. degree
___	___	Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree
___	___	Other _____

9. What requirements should exist to become eligible for advanced certification as a cooperating teacher?

ST	PST	
___	___	State teacher certification only
___	___	One year of teaching experience
___	___	Three years of teaching experience
___	___	Five years of teaching experience
___	___	Specialized training for cooperating teachers
___	___	Performance as a cooperating teacher
___	___	Teaching performance
___	___	B.S. or B.A. degree
___	___	M.S. or M.A. degree
___	___	Ed.D. or Ph.D. degree
___	___	Other _____

10. Should the cooperating teacher certificate be linked with any of the following? Please check all appropriate.

___ Course work for certificate count toward advancement on teacher certification renewal (if Missouri ceases to have a permanent certificate).

___ Course work for certificate count toward advance on salary scale.

___ Course work for certificate count toward an advanced degree.

___ Teachers with certificate paid more than those without certificate for being a cooperating teacher.

11. If certification was a requirement for cooperating teachers, would you be willing to participate in the necessary training?

___ Yes
___ No
___ Depends on _____
_____

12. In your opinion what are some of the advantages of certifying cooperating teachers?

13. In your opinion what are some of the disadvantages of certifying cooperating teachers?

14. What mode of training would you like to see for training cooperating teachers?

___ College course(s) in supervision
___ College workshop(s)
___ Teacher center workshops
___ Local school district in-service training
___ Other _____

15. Why do you not favor the certification of cooperating teachers?

Thank you again for your cooperation in answering this questionnaire.